

American Superstitions. Astrology. When astrological science was much countenanced, Jacob Taylor, a good mathematician, who from keeping a small school near Abington became to be the Surveyor General of the Province of Pennsylvania, calculated the aspect of the planets when the City of Philadelphia was founded, & expressed the result in the following lines, written in the year 1723:-

"Full forty years have now their changes made,  
Since the foundation of this town was laid; -  
When Jove and Saturn were in Leo joined

They saw the survey of the place design'd.  
Swift were these planets, and the world will own,  
Swift was the progress of the rising town.

The Lion is an active regal sign;  
And Sol beheld the two superiors join.

A City built with such propitious rays  
Will stand to see old walls and happy days.

But kingdoms, cities, men in every state  
Are subject to vicissitudes of fate.

An envious cloud may shade the smiling morn,  
Though fates ordain the beaming Sun's return!"

Witchcraft. It appears from the provincial executive minutes preserved at Harrisburg in Penn. that they had <sup>an</sup> actual trial for witchcraft in that province. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of Dec 1683 Margaret Mattson and Geshro Bendrickson, Swedish women, who had been accused as witches on the 7<sup>th</sup> inst, were cited to their trial; on which occasion there were present as their judges, Gov. Wm Penn this Council, James Hammon, William Biles, Sasse Cock, William Haigue, C. Taylor, William Clayton & Thomas Holmes. The Governor having given the Grand Jury their charge, they found the Bill. The testimony of the witnesses before the Petit jury is recorded. Margaret Mattson being arraigned, "she pleads not guilty, and will be tried by the country". Several witnesses were examined, & many vague stories



told about her bewitching calves, geese &c. - that often were rather above her malignant powers, but which reached all other cattle.

The daughter of Margaret Matteson was said to have expressed her convictions of her mother being a witch, and the reported say so's of the daughter were given in evidence. The dame Matteson "denieth Charles Asheorn's attestation at her soul, and saith where is my daughter? let her come and say so." - "the prisoner denieth all things and saith that the witness speaks only by hearsay." Governor Penn finally charged the Jury, who brought in a verdict sufficiently ambiguous and ineffective for such a dubious offence, saying they find her "guilty of having the common fame of a witch, but not guilty in the manner and form as she stands indicted". They, however, take care to defend the good people of the province from their future malfeasance by exacting from each of them security for good behaviour for six months. A decision infinitely more wise than hanging or drowning. They had each of them husbands, and Sape Cock served as Interpreter to Mrs Matteson. By this judicious verdict Pennsylvania probably escaped the odium of Salem. There was however in Penn. a law against witches entitled "an act against confutation, witchcraft and dealing with evil and wicked spirits, by which it is provided that the act of King James the first on those subjects should be put in execution in that province and be of like force & effect as if the same were therein repeated and enacted. This law of Pennsylvania was confirmed in all its parts the next year after its passage by George 2<sup>d</sup> this Council, 18 Peers being present! -

The Virginians too, say as they were then deemed in their religious sentiments had their trial of Grace Sherwood for witchcraft in Princeps Ann County, as the records there will show. The populace also seconded the Court by suspecting her to the Trial of water, the place at Walk's farm, near the ferry, is still called "witch duck".

## Southold witch -

During the Revolutionary war  
an old woman named Brown  
resided in the town of Southold  
she was ~~as a~~ considered by the  
people in the neighbourhood to  
be a witch - She appears to  
have been of a malignant  
disposition - It was customary  
for her to go among the inhabit-  
ants and ask them to lend her  
~~some~~ ~~some~~ bushel of wheat, which at  
that time was worth a guinea  
a bushel, which she knew  
the most of them durst not  
refuse - Some of them how-  
ever did refuse & the consequence  
was that either their cattle died  
or were diseased, their bread  
spoiled in the making or baking  
or if it baked well, the  
loaves in the middle would  
contain crooked pins & balls of

hair



## The Devil in Southold.

The following singular circumstances transpired in the town of Southold in Suffolk County N.Y. abt the commencement of the American Revolution. A clergyman a very respectable man, who at that period was a bachelor but was courted by a lady who afterward became his wife, having been to visit his intended <sup>on a Sabbath evening</sup> was returning home abt 11 o'clock at night which was quite dark when his attention was attracted by an old building which <sup>they</sup> long been deserted but was then used for storing a small quantity of lumber, the house appeared to be illuminated & from ~~the~~ proceeded the sound of the tambourine & viol. <sup>this</sup> struck him as a very unusual method <sup>of</sup> proceeding to celebrate the sanctity of the Sabbath eve. He summoned all his courage & determined to find out who it was.

"In solitarie rooms there uproves keep".

He ~~approached~~ <sup>approached</sup> accordingly, knocked at the  
front door, which was an old fashioned  
one, opening lengthwise in two parts,  
no answer was returned but suddenly  
all was dark - he pushed open the  
door & encountered a large - terrible  
looking black playing the tune of  
"Jack the jolly drummer" on a violin.  
The black asked him if he would  
not walk in & participate in their  
sport. at this moment all Mr  
Smith's courage forsook him - he  
returned no answer, but turned off  
with a quick pace & pursued his  
way home as fast as possible -  
On the story becoming public the  
good people of Southold could account  
for it in no other manner than by  
supposing that they had had a  
visit from his Satanic Majesty -



## Witchcraft

abt. 18 years ago in Fulton St Brooklyn near where Eldridge St  
in a small old house on an eminence  
now comes out lived an old woman named Eagles then  
husband - she was a busy, bustling old lady & made considerable  
money by selling brooms & other knockknacks, <sup>used to go to church every Sunday the husband</sup>  
on the contrary was a puny little mortal & rather sceptical  
principles took it in his head that his wife had bewitched him.  
At that time there lived in Brooklyn a <sup>black</sup> man named Gill who  
called himself doctor & pretended to cure persons bewitched  
to him old Mr Eagles applied & stated his case & told him he  
was wasting away & that he believed his wife had bewitched  
him to that Gill replied that there was no doubt of it & that he  
would cure him, if he would send for him when his <sup>(c.)</sup> wife was  
from home. Accordingly on the next Sabbath when the old woman  
was at church Gill & Eagles met at the house. Gill made some  
dough of wheat flour & water & kneaded it in the form of a man  
spit it on a shingle before the fire to bake. When it began to  
bake he told Eagles, <sup>that his wife would shortly come but</sup> he must close all the doors & windows & keep his  
<sup>her</sup> wife out until it was entirely baked or he would not be cured  
but if he did so he would be cured. At the time it was  $\frac{1}{2}$   
baked ~~the~~ church was out & the old woman came home &  
finding the house all shut up (which was an unusual circum-  
stance) she began to thump at the door & window crying  
out that Eagles had killed himself. Inside Eagles was running  
about first at a door & then at a window to see that all  
was safe & the black doctor was sweating over the fire to  
bake the dough man. The old lady on the outside did not

relish the idea of being kept out of her house & went to fence  
close by & got a stake <sup>with</sup> which she knocked down the outer  
door & latched in - There said the Doctor I cannot do any  
cure unless you can keep your wife out, she marked out -

abt the same period a man named Boy ~~resided~~ at  
Foster's meadow a few miles beyond Jamaica in Queens County  
whom most of the neighbours believed was a wizard & practiced  
the necromantic art & consequently avoided ~~him~~ all intercourse  
with him -



### Omens and Superstitions.

The Aurora Borealis or Northern light were frequent in the Colonies during ~~the~~ a great part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The first ever noticed in New England was on the 11<sup>th</sup> of Dec 1719 & was very remarkable. Flashes were said to have been continually heard. The hemisphere seemed to glow like an oven. Many thought that the end of the world was at hand & expected every moment to behold the Son of man coming in the clouds to judge the world.

### Witchcraft in Virginia.

About the year 1727, when the back settlers of Virginia were almost as proverbial for their prejudices as were the first settlers of Plymouth, an old woman, about 120 miles from Richmond on James River, was so unfortunate as to have a sow litter a pig with two tails. This circumstance soon overran the settlement. A general alarm was spread; & the parson of the parish was resorted to by the affrighted people to account for the wonderful phenomenon; The sage divine after duly considering the affair, declared that, as all pigs by nature were endowed with one tail, it was probable that the devil was officious in the generation of this litter, & as he cannot make any thing perfect, that these two tails were left as a mark of his imperfection; the parson further observed that as other neighbours had sows, on whom the evil spirit might have tried his operations, his partiality to the old woman was a proof that she must have a connection with him, & that she could be nothing less than a witch. The poor woman was immediately apprehended, & it was determined to tie her

up in a sack & throw her in the river - if she floated, she was a witch, & must be taken out & hung, but if she sunk, then she was innocent - A vast ~~of~~ concourse of people assembled to see the operation, while the churchwardens were absolutely engaged in drawing the sack over her, Col. Taylor hit on the following stratagem to save her. He told them they were all wrong & that he had a much surer way of trying whether she was a witch without half the trouble, which was to put the woman in one scale and the large Church Bible in the opposite scale, & if the Bible outweighed the woman she was a witch & ought to be burned, but if the woman was the heavier, she was no witch & ought to be at liberty. The Colonel's method was approved of & the trial made. The result of which was as might well be anticipated, that the woman was the heavier & was therefore declared to be no witch. Thus was the life of a poor woman ~~and~~ preserved, who but for this stratagem, must have fallen a sacrifice to the ignorance & prejudice of the people.



## Am Sup Witchcraft

Abt 30 years since I was in Portsmouth ~~there~~ was an old woman named Sturwell living in Hempstead reputed a witch from the following story by her son! He had been fishing on coming home was broiling a fish on some coals - He observed a large black Cat come into the place & walked about the frying white cookeny, crying - He got tired of the Cat & taking a stick threw it at the animal hit it on the fore leg & it immediately disappeared - He very soon after discovered that his ~~old mother~~ had her arm broken - The inference was that she was the black cat & her arm was broken under that circumstance by his throwing the stick & hitting the cat on the fore leg! after that she was known as a witch - And I have heard in 1833 a grandson of hers spoken of as the grandson of the old witch!

Sir

Silas Wood Esq of Suffolk County  
has been nominated by a Convention  
held in the City of New York, to  
represent this District in the Senate  
of this State.

Mr Wood's talents as a Statesman  
and the honor he will, if elected,  
confer on this section of the State,  
induce a hope in his friends that  
he will meet with the cordial  
support of all the friends to the  
best interests of our country without  
reference to party.

Enclosed are some tickets which it  
is desired you will, by yourself  
and friends, place into the ballot  
box and thus secure the election  
of a man who can bear the test  
of "Is he honest - is he capable?"

The election commences on Monday  
Nov 7<sup>th</sup> inst & continues until Wednesday  
afternoon 9<sup>th</sup> inst.



American superstitions (Witchcraft)

Abt 30 years since when James Blackwell Esq owned Blackwell Island at Hell Gate, New York & worked the celebrated stone quarries there - at one period he had employed in blasting & getting out the stone between 40 & 50 men - He was then much thronged with business being under a heavy contract to supply stone for several stores building in the City - One night when the men left work as was customary with them they left all their tools in the quarry - The next morning it was discovered they were all stolen - Mr Blackwell crossed to New York & inquired of one of his acquaintances if he could inform of any particulars by which he might discover the perpetrators of the theft - He told him he could not, but advised him to call on an old woman whom he named & she could tell him, for she was a witch & lived in the City - Mr Blackwell ridiculed this mode of recovery his lost property, but started for the City with the view of explaining the reason of not supplying stone according to his contract & to ask for time until he could procure a new set of tools - In passing the street where the witch lived he stopped in soon his entry She told what he came for & he asked who had stolen she said she could not tell & asked him if he suspected any person to which he said no - She then took a Bible placed a key on it & put her hand on the key & told him to name the Christian names of as many persons as he could think of soon his naming the thief the key would turn over itself - He then named some 12 or 15 persons his neighbours & the witch said nothing - He then recollected a man named Feun was in the habit of frequently passing the Island in the night to make hay from Harlem She named him - on which the witch immediately observed, Ay that is he, B. then asked if he was the thief to which she said I can tell you nothing more, but in passing down the City you will meet with a man who will tell you where

your tools are B was still in custody he paid the old woman 2 or 3 shillings to let her go. She was an old German woman so competent that she moved with difficulty. It was a warm summer day this passing down Broadway about 13 on his way to expose the non performance of his contract Mr B observed that Pine St was shady & comp aratively cool the ladies into that St where he soon with a young man named Samuel who had formerly worked for him in the quarry & on asking him what he was then doing I am told him he was going up the North River to quarry for Henry at \$12 a month. I saw Mr B, enquires informed him that Henry had a complete set of tools & was going to embark in the quarry business. This immediately struck Mr B & after many doubts Henry on his own mind he took the necessary steps & obtained a search warrant from Alderman Chapin & proceeded with an officer to the small vessel of Henry then

Sir

Silas Wood Esq of Suffolk County has been nominated by a Convention held in the City of New York, to represent this District in the Senate of this State.

Mr Woods talents as a Statesman and the honor he will, if elected, confer on this section of the State, induce a hope in his friends that he will meet the cordial support of all the friends to the best interests of our country without reference to party.

Enclosed are some tickets which it is desired you will, by yourself and friends, place into the ballot box and thus secure the election of a man who can bear the test of "Is he honest - is he capable?" The election commences on Monday Nov 7 inst & continues until Wednesday afternoon

of the inst -  
Lying at one of the wharves of the City just ready to go up the North River, to his great surprise he there found all of his tools which had been stolen - thus verifying both of the assertions of the old woman.

To be put under note of no trials for witchcraft  
under Dutch under Ralph Trial -

But in New Eng. Superstition swayed her iron scepter  
over a region <sup>shrouded by the black clouds of</sup> intellectual darkness. <sup>Rev</sup> Cotton  
Mather one of the most learned men of his day in his  
work styled The Wonders of the Invisible World  
gives us a very strong <sup>idea</sup> description of the state of know-  
ledge at that period as will appear by the following  
extract - "The devils were walking abt our streets with  
lengthened chains, making a dreadful noise in our  
ears; and brimstone (even without a metaphor) was  
making a horrid & hellish stench in our nostrils."



## Definition of a Witch -

A witch was defined to be, a person ~~of~~ who having the free use of reason, both knowingly & willingly seek, and obtain of the Devil or of any other god, beside ~~the~~ true Jehovah, an ability to do or know strange things which he <sup>or she</sup> cannot by their own human abilities arrive at -

Janatessen in 1828 a man appeared in  
Ohio & called himself the Christ - He gave out that  
the millennium was abt to commence that he  
was to attend to the spiritual concerns of the world  
while his brother, who was with him was to manage  
the temporal affairs. This brother wrote <sup>to</sup> the  
members of Congress at their session desiring each  
of them to forward him \$10 to enable him to  
support his dignity as <sup>Temporal</sup> Governor of the whole  
Earth. They had as usual a number of followers.

\$800 - Paid June 24<sup>th</sup> 1824

The Brooklyn Fire  
Insurance Company

John Peck  
To  
Bond

A. J. [unclear] - In [unclear]  
[unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]  
[unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] - [unclear]  
[unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] - &  
[unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] - [unclear]  
[unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]  
[unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]



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Am Supp. - 1836 -  
was in the district of Columbia in Long Island  
he was escorted by the police to the town of Rockaway to visit a  
girl said to be bewitched. A great excitement among  
the inhabitants - some of the men were in a house  
at that spot they found many people assembled the girl was lying on

and back on the road with a horse and a pack on which the persons present  
intended to travel. The pack was made up of a few articles of clothing and a  
small amount of food. The horse was a good one and the pack was well  
balanced. The persons present were all well and the journey was made  
without any difficulty. The horse was a good one and the pack was well  
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without any difficulty.



American Superstitions -

Witchcraft

Witchcraft In the year 1652 at the town of Hartford in Connecticut Mrs Greensmith was executed for witchcraft. She was the first witch ever heard of in America. At her trial the Rev. Mr. Stone, & other ministers swore that Greensmith had confessed to them that the Devil had had carnal knowledge of her.

Cure for the Rheumatism.

had had carnal knowledge of her -

Cure for the Rheumatism - The following was told to me <sup>in sober earnest</sup> ~~in the~~ <sup>in fact</sup> years <sup>1832</sup> ago by a man whom I know very well & he also told me he had tried it & it had cured him, so that he had not had the Rheumatism for five years. Take the parings of all your finger & toe nails, tie them up in a rag, or piece of paper, bore a hole in the north side of a white oak tree, & put them in it - then plug up the hole, & as long as the tree lives, so long will you be free from your rheumatism - but when the tree dies your rheumatism will return -

Money digging

will return -  
Money digging - In the month of Decr 1816 whilst I was at school at Bergen in N. Jersey, a man made his appearance in that town by the aid of divining rod pretended to discover that money was buried under the floor of the old church in that place, and obtained permission from the officers of the church to take up the floor & dig for it - The permission was granted & the floor taken up & the digging commenced - The most money that ~~was~~ found as far I could learn was a sixpence which had fallen thro a crack <sup>in</sup> of the floor & that was found by black Sam. the sexton, when the floor was taken up - (put in other digging in Ballar in Gold St N.Y. & tradition that money was Kid buried his money on small islets in Noroton River in Conn -

Witchcraft American Superstitions -

In 1672 the inhabitants of Westchester complained to the Governor & Council of New York against a witch who had come among them, she having been previously condemned as a witch & imprisoned at Hartford. During the year 1673 a similar complaint was made to the Dutch Gov. Colver & he treated it as idle & groundless.

Fanaticism

In the year 1673 a fanatic made his appearance in the City of New York (then New Orange), & pretending to be divinely inspired, made "a terrible hue & cry in the streets," crying on the bridge before the houses of the Hon. Stuyvesant, and John Lawrence, "Woe, woe to the crown of pride and the drunkards of Ephraim: Two woes past, the third coming, except you repent - Repent, repent - as the kingdom of <sup>God</sup> ~~heaven~~ is at hand -" who, as stated in the record of his subsequent conviction, also entered the church, & made a great noise, abused with severity the word of God, & afterward went through the Dutch villages on Long Island, to New England, & returned to his residence at Oyster Bay, having every where cried the same words; was protested against before the notary public in the City of New ~~York~~ <sup>Jersey</sup>, prosecuted by the attorney General, & condemned to be severely ~~whipped~~ flogged & banished forever.

Witchcraft - The Connecticut code of Laws enacted in 1650 provides "If any man or woman bee a Witch, that is, hath or consulteth with a familiar spirit, they shall bee put to death. Exodus 22.18. Levit. 20.27. - Deut. 18.10, 11 -"



## American Superstitions - First Witchcraft

The following relation is taken from Cotton Mather's *Magicalia*. "Relating the wonders of the invisible world in preternatural occurrences"

"Ann Cole, a person of serious piety, living in the house of her godly father at Bedford, in the year 1662, was taken with very strange fits wherein her tongue was improv'd by a daemon, to express things unknown to herself. The general purpose of the discourse, which held sometimes for a considerable while, was, that such & such persons named in the discourse, were consulting how they might carry on mischievous designs against her and several others, by afflicting their bodies or destroying their good names; upon all which the general answer heard among these invisible speakers, was ah! she runs to the rock! after such an entertainment was held for some hours, the daemons were heard saying, let us confound her language, that she may tell no more tales. Whereupon the conference became unintelligible to the standers by; then it pass'd in a Dutch tone, giving therein an account of mischiefs that had befallen divers persons, & amongst the rest, what had befallen to a woman that lived next neighbour to a Dutch family then in the town; which woman had been prematurely indisposed. Several eminent ministers wrote the speeches of the spirits, thus heard in the mouth of this Ann Cole; and one of the persons therein mentioned, as active in the matter then spoken of (whose name was Greenwith) being then in prison on suspicion of witchcraft, was brought before the magistrates. The ministers now reading to her what they had written, she with astonishment, confessed that the things were so, & that she with other persons, named in the papers, had familiarity with a devil. She said that she had not yet

Note \* The Dutch & English were not at that period very good friends that may account for the Devil's speaking in a Dutch tone.



made a formal covenant with her devil, but only promised that she would go with him when he called her, that at Christmas they would have a merry meeting,\* and then the agreement between them should be subscribed. She acknowledged the day following, that when the ministers began to read what they did, she was in such a rage, that she could have torn them to pieces; and she was resolved upon the denial of her guilt: but after they had read awhile, she was as if her flesh were pulled from her bones, and she could no longer deny what they charged upon her. She declared that ~~the~~<sup>the</sup> devil appeared unto her first in the shape of deer, skipping about her, and at last proceeded so far as in that shape to talk with her; & that the devil had frequently carnal knowledge of her.

Upon this confession, with other concurrent evidence, the woman was executed, & other persons accused, made their escape: whereupon Ann Cole was happily delivered from the extraordinary ~~trials~~ troubles wherewith she had been exercised."

The same author also mentions the death in the winter of 1684 of Mr Philip Smith "aged about 50 years, a son of eminently virtuous parents, a deacon of a church in Hadley, a member of the General Court, a justice in the Country Court, a select man for the affairs of the town, a lieutenant of the troop, and which crowns all a man for devotion, sanctity, gravity, and all that was honest, exceeding exemplary." Such a man was in the winter of the year 1684, murdered with an hideous witchcraft, that filled all those parts of New England with a astonishment. Mr Mather in mentioning the supernatural occurrences which attended the death of this Mr Smith states the following: "Gally pots of medicine, provided for the sick man, were unaccountably empty: audible scratchings were made about the bed, when his hands and feet lay wholly still, & were held by others. They beheld fire sometimes on the bed; Note & This a true Presbyterian slap at the festival Christmas.

and when the beholders began to discourse of it, it vanished away. Several people actually felt something often stir in the bed, at a considerable distance from the man: it seemed as big as a cat, but they could never grasp it. Several trying to lean on the bed's head, tho' the sick man lay wholly still, the bed would shake so as to knock their heads uncomfortably. A very strong man could not lift the sick man to make him lie more easily, tho' he apply'd his utmost strength unto it; and yet he could go presently and lift a bedstead and a bed, and a man lying on it, without any strain to himself at all. Mr Smith dies: the jury that viewed his corpse, found a swelling on one breast, his privities wounded or burned, his back full of bruises, and several holes that seemed made with awls. After the opinion of all had pronounced him dead, his countenance continued as lively as if he had been alive; his eyes closed as in a slumber, and his lower jaw not falling down. Thus he remained from Saturday morning about sunrise till Sabbath day in the afternoon; when those who took him out of the bed found him still warm, tho' the season was as cold as had almost been known in any age: and a raw English winter does not want for cold. On the night following his countenance was yet fresh as before; but on Monday morning they found the face extremely turnify'd & discoloured. It was black & blue, & fresh blood seemed running down his cheek upon the hair. Several noises were also heard in the room where the corpse lay; as the clattering of chairs & stools, whereof no account could be given. This was the end of so good a man. And I could with unquestionable evidence relate the tragical deaths of several good men in this land attended with such preternatural circumstances, which have loudly call'd upon us all to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.



American  
Superstitions generally.

Cotton Mather in his *Magnalia* appears to have been of opinion that daemons originally inhabited forests. He says "When two goats were offered unto the Lord (and only unto the Lord) on the day of expiation, among the ancient Israelites, we read that one of them was to fall by lot unto Azazel. Azazel cannot without some hardship on the sense, be taken for the name of the scape-goat itself: But it is no other than the name of the devil himself, as might be easily be proved from the monuments of the greatest both Jewish & Christian antiquities."

He then proceeds to say "Whatever becomes of the observation which we have hitherto been making, there has been too much cause to observe that the Christians who were driven into the American desert, which is now called New England, have to their sorrow seen Azazel dwelling & raging there in a very tragical instances. The devils have doubtless felt a more than ordinary vexation, from the arrival of those Christians with their sacred exercises of Christianity in this wilderness: But the sovereignty of heaven has permitted them still to remain in the wilderness, for our vexation, as well as their own. Molestation from evil spirits, in more sensible and surprising operations, than those finer methods, wherein they commonly work upon the minds of all men, but especially of ill men, have so abounded in this country, that I question whether any one town had been free from sad examples of them. The neighbours have not been careful enough to record & attest the prodigious occurrences of this importance, which have been among us. Many true and strange occurrences from the invisible world, in these parts of the world, are faultily buried in oblivion. But some of these very stupendous things have had their memory preserved in the written memorials of honest, prudent, and faithful men; whose veracity in the relations cannot without great injury be questioned. Of these I will offer the publick some remarkable histories; for every one which we have had such a sufficient evidence, that no reasonable man in this whole country ever did question them; it will be unreasonable to do it in any other. For my own part, I would be as exceedingly afraid of writing a false thing, as of doing an ill thing: but have my pen always more in the fear of God.

An Superstitions Extracts from Connecticut Code of Laws established  
in the year 1650. Under head of "Capitall Lawes."

"If any man or woman bee a Witch, that is, hath or consenteth with a  
familliar spiritt, they shall bee put to death. Exodus 22. 18. — Levit. 20.  
27. — Deut. 18. 10, 11."

"If any person shall slay another through guile, either by poisonings  
or other such Devillish practice, hee shall bee put to death. Exo. 21. 14."



## American Superstitions

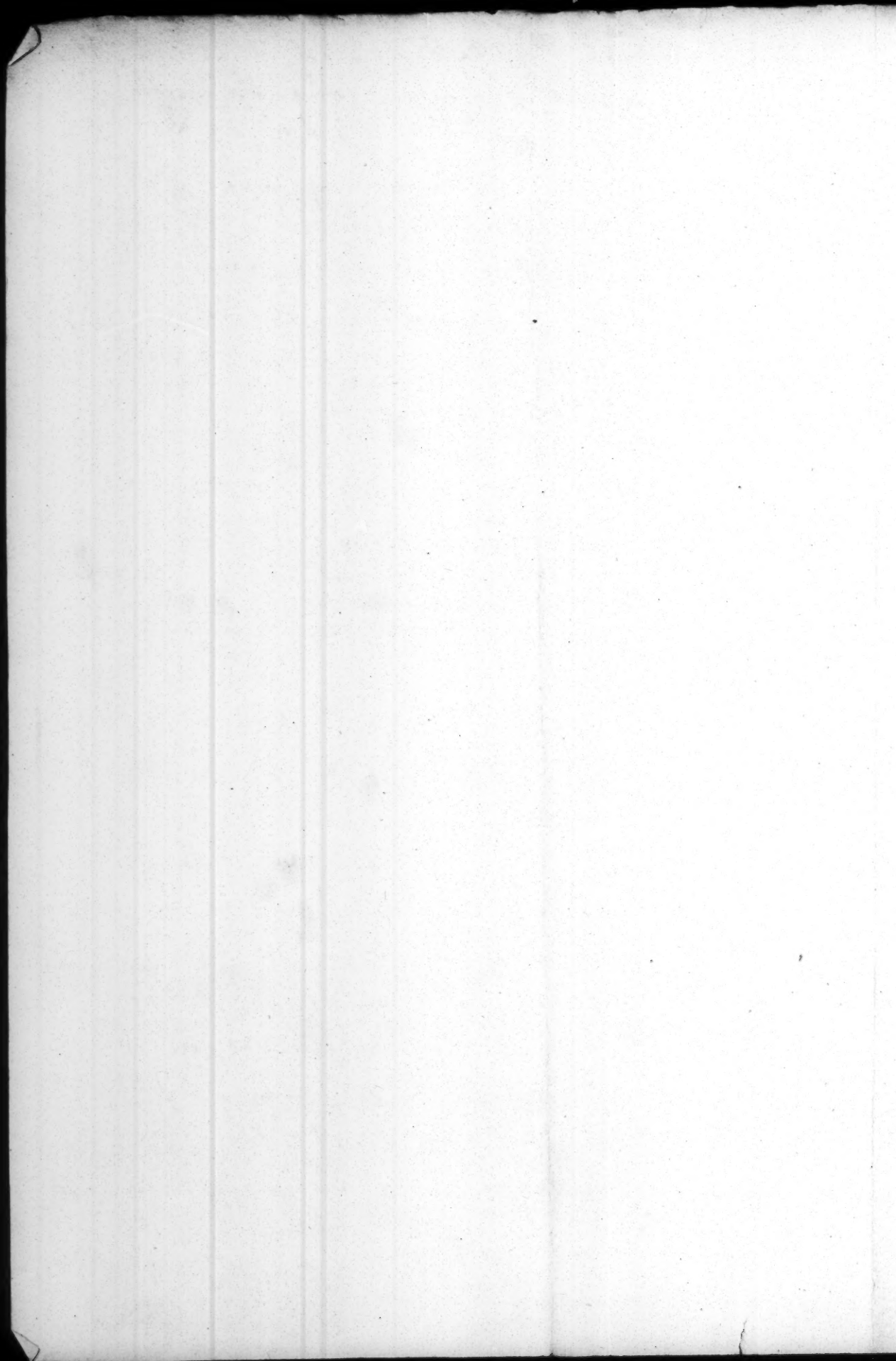
The early govt of the Colony of New York do not seem to have regarded much the existence of witchcraft & other supernatural agencies - Feb'y 16. 1675 the govt issued a warrant against ~~Peter~~ Peter & Met, "who doth pretend & hath reported to have seen sights or visions in this city or fort, which tends to the disquiet & disturbance of his Majesty's subjects in these parts."

Am Sup

Obea "The term Obeah, Obiah, or Obia (for it is variously written,) we conceive to be the adjective, & Obe or Obi the noun substantive; & that by the word Obia-men or women, are meant those who practice Obi. The origin of the term we should concern of no importance in our answer to the questions proposed, if, in search of it, we were not led to disquisitions that are highly gratifying to curiosity. From the learned Mr Bryant's Commentary upon the word Oph, we obtain a very probable etymology of the term — 'a serpent, in the Egyptian language was called Ob or Aub' — 'Obion is still the Egyptian name for a serpent' — 'Moses, in the name of God, forbid, the Israelites ever to inquire of the demon Ob, which is translated in our Bible, Channer, or Wizar, Divinator aut Sorcilegus' — 'The woman at Endor is called oub or ob, translated Pythonissa; & Oubaios (he cites from Horus Apollo) was the name of the Basilisk or royal serpent, emblem of the Sun, and an ancient oracular deity of Africa' — This derivation, which applies to one particular sect, the remnant probably of a very celebrated religious order in remote ages, is now become in Jamaica the general term to denote those Africans who in that Island practice witchcraft or sorcery, comprehending also the class of what are called Myal-men, or those who, by means of a narcotic potion, made with the juice of an herb, (said to be the branches calalut or species of solanum) which occasions a trance or profound sleep of a certain duration, endeavor to convince the deluded spectators of their power to reanimate dead bodies — In the West Indies "the professors of Obi are, and always were, natives of Africa, & none other." "The oldest & most crafty are those who usually attract the greatest devotion & confidence; those whose hoary heads, & a somewhat peculiarly harsh & forbidding in their aspect, together with some skill in plants of the medicinal & poisonous species, have qualified them for successful imposition upon the weak & credulous. The negroes in general, whether Africans or Creoles, revere, consult & fear them; to these oracles they



resort, with the most implicit faith upon all occasions, whether for the cure of disorders, the obtaining revenge for injuries or insults, the conciliating of favour, the discovery & punishment of the thief or the adulterer, & the prediction of future events - The trade which these impostors carry on is extremely lucrative; they manufacture & sell their Obies adapted to different cases & at different prices - "a veil of mystery is studiously thrown over their incantations, to which the midnight hours are allotted, & every precaution is taken to conceal them from the knowledge & discovery of the white people." "A negro who is taken ill inquires of the Obeah - man the cause of his sickness, whether it will prove mortal or not, & within what time he shall die or recover? The oracle generally descends, ascribe, the disease to the malice of some particular person by name, & advises to let Obi for that person; but if no hopes are given of ~~discovery~~ recovery, immediate despair takes place, which no medicine can remove, & death is the certain consequence - Those anomalous symptoms which originate from causes deeply rooted in the mind, such as the terror of Obi, or from poisons, whose operation is slow & intricate, will baffle the skill of the ablest physician" - "The Obi is usually composed of a farrago of materials, most of which are enumerated in the Jamaica law, viz: "Blood, feathers, parrots beaks, dogs teeth, alligators teeth, broken bottles, grave dirt, rum, & egg shells." The above is an Extract from the Report of the Agent of the Island of Jamaica to the Commissioners appointed to examine into the Slave trade -





Am Sup Witchery

In the month of January 1834

I stepped in for a few moments a book store of Chatham Street N York where I have been in the habit of occasionally buying books - While there I heard a voice asking the Store keeper if he had any book on the black art & he in reply produced the Book of Fate of which so many thousands are retailed throughout the Country - The purchaser was a countryman with a peevish unmeaning face - he got into conversation & states that he had lived in the Western part of this State, and that altho' he was formerly an unbeliever in every thing connected with witchcraft, he was now a firm believer in it and had good cause to be - That they (the witches) had power to make one person love another by using love powder, which was given in divers ways as in victuals, in snuff, by borrowing any thing - that those who followed such pursuits were mostly

women, but sometimes, tho' not often,  
men, he had known instances  
they were very dangerous to society  
& (to use his own language) confound  
'em they deserve to have their tamel  
brains beat out - On being asked abt  
the component parts of this Love powder  
he said he knew how it was made  
and that it was not animal nor  
vegetable but mostly reptile.

That he had spent much time in study-  
ing their black art in order to be able  
to resist them.

He then began examining the book he  
was abt purchasing & asked if there  
was any thing in it abt a man being  
under the planet, for he believed that  
was true. The Bookseller told him he  
thought there was & turned to some  
prognostications of the fate of those who  
were born at different periods in the  
age of the Moon - Our Wiseman com-  
menced reading in a crackling tone  
that a child born on the 26 day of the  
Moon would be of an ingenious  
disposition and attain a high  
standing in the world - as soon as he

had read that, he exclaimed that was the book he wanted for it told the truth, for he was born on the 26 day of June

He told us there was a very wise doctor in the part of the State he had lived in who could tell any thing that was the matter with his patients, and that he done it by making figures on a paper, but what those figures were no one could tell.

a few days before this at the same place I met with a ~~very~~ amiable old gentleman, who told me of a very wicked young man whom he <sup>formerly</sup> knew - that he was so wicked as to practise the black art and hocus focus and read the Lords Prayer backwards &c. That one time when he was walking the earth appeared to open before him & he seemed to fall into Hell

That he was then confined to his bed for some considerable time in a most miserable state, and while he lay so the people were afraid to go in the room where he was for thunder & lightning appeared to roll thro it - ~~and~~ That after he left his bed he became a very exemplary man & eventually a preacher.